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WHODUNIT BUZZ AS ONE ROGUE MISSILE HITS POLAND, KILLS TWO

Ukraine fired a few missiles to thwart an incoming Russian projectile but one of them may have fallen in Polish territory

NATO DEFENDS KYIV, BLAMES MOSCOW FOR WAR

"There is nothing, absolutely nothing, to suggest that it was an intentional attack on Poland," Polish President Andrzej Duda said. Echoing the same, NATO secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg said it was likely caused by a Ukrainian air defence missile. "This is not Ukraine's fault. Russia bears ultimate responsibility... The whole incident is caused by Russia's war"

BIDEN RUSHES TO RULE OUT RUSSIAN ROLE

- Before the Polish and NATO assessments, US President Joe Biden had said it was 'unlikely' that Russia fired the missiles
- The findings are a relief to NATO. Ever since President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian troops into Ukraine in February, NATO has been trying hard not be dragged into a wider war | P12

2.4 lakh

TOTAL CASUALTIES DUE TO UKRAINE WAR SO FAR, ACCORDING TO THE U.S. MILITARY

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

India takes charge of G20 presidency

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Indonesia's President Joko Widodo take part in the handover ceremony at the G20 Summit in Bali on Wednesday | AP

UK, INDIA DOOR OPENS FOR 3,000 GRADS

Britain on Wednesday announced the contours of the UK-India Young Professionals Scheme, under which the UK will offer 3,000 places annually to 18-30 year-old degree educated Indian nationals to come to the UK to live and work for up to two years. The scheme will be reciprocal. The announcement was made after the first bilateral meeting Modi had with Sunak | P9

Assures tenure will be inclusive, ambitious, decisive, action-oriented

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday formally took charge of the G20 presidency from Indonesian President Joko Widodo in Bali, with the former assuring it will be inclusive, ambitious, decisive and action-oriented.

"Together with every countries' efforts, we can make the G20 summit a catalyst for global welfare," Modi said at a brief ceremony.

In the Bali Declaration to which India had constructively contributed, members deplored in the strongest terms Russia's aggression against Ukraine and demanded its complete and unconditional withdrawal from the annexed territories. It also deplored Russia's veiled threats on the use of nuclear weapons, saying it was inadmissible.

"Today's era must not be of war," the declaration said, echoing Modi's remark during his bilateral meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin at Samarkand in September. It acknowledged differences among members on the Ukraine war but emphasised the need to adhere to international law, including protection of civilians caught in conflicts.

Earlier in the day, while addressing a session on digital transformation, Modi said it could be a force multiplier to fight global poverty.

"Can we take a pledge together that in the next 10 years we will bring digital transformation in the life of every human being, so that no person in the world will be deprived of the benefits of digital technology?" Modi added.

On the sidelines of the G20 meet, Modi held bilateral talks with six heads of state — British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Italian PM Giorgia Meloni, Singapore PM Lee Hsien Loong and Australian PM Antony Albanese.

One interesting talking point was on how Chinese President Xi Jinping went after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau over the leaked reports of their bilateral meeting. An agitated Xi was seen saying, "Everything we discuss has been leaked to the paper, that's not appropriate." Trudeau responded, saying: "We believe in free and open and frank dialogue." Xi retorted, "Let us create the conditions first." P12

Abduction charge as AAP's Surat nominee opts out

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

Kanchan Jariwala

AMID high drama, the Aam Aadmi Party's Surat (East) candidate Kanchan Jariwala on Wednesday announced his withdrawal from the poll race, but the party alleged he was forced to do so by BJP goons who had kidnapped him the previous day.

Taking cognisance of the matter, the Election Commission of India directed the Gujarat chief electoral officer to inquire and take action "as warranted".

It issued the order after a four-member AAP delegation led by Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia met commission officials in the evening and handed over a representation after holding a protest outside the EC office in Delhi.

While Jariwala released a video statement in the morning denying he was kidnapped, AAP leader Sanjay Singh pointed to another video showing their candidate surrounded by unidentified persons and some police personnel entering the Returning Officer's office.

"Yesterday, some BJP goons took Jariwala to the Returning Officer's office and tried to get his poll nomination cancelled. But it could not be done since the papers were in order, so they kidnapped him. Our candidate has been missing ever since and his house is locked. What kind of election is this?" Singh wondered.

The BJP rebutted the allegations with Union minister Anurag Thakur accusing AAP of making false claims to cover-up charges of corruption against it. "Those who once agitated against graft are now neck deep in corruption," he said.

For his part, Jariwala took a Zen-like position: "During the election campaign people asked why I became an anti-national and anti-Gujarat party candidate. I listened to my inner voice and withdrew without any pressure."

Sanjay Singh claimed the chief electoral officer of Gujarat was apprised on the situation on Tuesday night itself after the party failed to get in touch with Jariwala.

INDIA USING TECH AS WEAPON IN WAR AGAINST POVERTY, SAYS PM

HRITHIK KIRAN BAGADE & UMA KANNAN @ Bengaluru

STRESSING the importance of technology in a swiftly developing India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the country is using technology in its war against poverty.

Virtually inaugurating the 25th edition of Bengaluru Tech Summit (BTS) 2022 here, the PM cited some favourable technology-oriented measures the country has undertaken to alleviate the poor, such as Svamitva scheme (use of drones), Jan Dhan Aadhaar Mobile (JAM) Trinity, etc. While Svamitva has brought authenticity to property records and provided the poor with access to credit, JAM ensured direct benefit transfer, he said.

The theme of the summit this year is 'Tech4NextGen'.

"Innovation is important. But when backed by integration, it becomes a force. Technology is being used to end silos, enable synergy and ensure service. On a shared platform, there are no silos," he added.

Highlighting the role of the country's youth is its tech journey, Modi emphasised that the future will be much bigger than the present, thanks to India's innovative youth and increased access to technology. "The youth has ensured tech and talent globalisation. We are using our talent for global good," the prime minister said.

Today, a mobile and data revolution in the country has increased connectivity. In the past eight years, broadband connections have risen from 60 million to 810 million, while smartphone users increased to 750 million from 150 million. Interestingly, internet growth is faster in rural areas. "A new demographic is being connected to the information superhighway," Modi said.

On the importance of democratising technology, Modi cited the example of Ayushman Bharat, which provides a safety net for nearly 200 million families, and the Covid vaccination drive, which ran on tech-driven platforms.

CONTINUED ON: P4

Information relating to projects, land use and institutions are available at a single place. Each stakeholder sees the same data, which helps solve problems even before they have occurred

Narendra Modi, PM

I call upon leaders of the scientific world to innovate for the betterment of the human race and develop technologies to create a new healthy human being and better future for all

Basavaraj Bommai, CM

25 YEARS & COUNTING

The tech summit's journey goes as far back as 1998, when Bangalore IT.biz was India's first-ever IT-focused event hosted by a city. It was inaugurated by the then PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and was followed by Bangalore Bio Summit in 2001, dedicated to Biotechnology. In 2017, both these events were merged as Bengaluru Tech Summit.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai flanked by Vision Group on BT chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and Vision Group on IT chairperson Kris Gopalakrishnan, InMobi Founder Navin Tewari (behind CM), and ministers (left, behind) from Australia, the UAE, and Finland, among other delegates, at the inauguration of Bengaluru Tech Summit 2022 on Wednesday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA

Aus to open consulate in Bengaluru in 2023

UMA KANNAN @ Bengaluru

AUSTRALIA has decided to open its Consulate General in Bengaluru in 2023. Announcing this at the Bengaluru Tech Summit on Wednesday, Australia's Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs Tim Watts said the new Consulate General will be its fifth diplomatic office in India.

"When it comes to critical technology, no partner matters more to Australia than India. That is why we are committed to opening our new joint Australia-India Centre of Excellence for critical and emerging technology policy right here in Bengaluru," he said.

He added, "The Australian government is deeply committed to advancing its technology partnership with India in the context of broad-based comprehensive strategic partnership".

Watts also said the new direct flight between Bengaluru and Sydney is running full since its launch in November. "The Australia-India technology relationship has now entered power play", Watts said.

The Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs said, "Australia recognises the immense value that India offers to its firms. Our aim is to support connections and explore growth opportunities". Watts added that Australia and India can work together to tackle many pressing challenges before the two countries, including developing new technologies to tackle climate change.

INSIDE ▸▸ New startup park, six high-tech cities: CM | Genomics Revolution 2.0 | 'India has much to gain from robotics' P4

Ajay Maken quits as AICC Raj in-charge

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

IN perhaps the first test for Mallikarjun Kharge after taking charge as Congress president, party leader Ajay Maken on Wednesday quit as AICC in-charge of Rajasthan. The timing of his resignation is significant as Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra is set to enter the desert state in the first week of December and Rajasthan Assembly elections are just a year away.

In his letter to Kharge, Maken cited the rebellion in the party on September 25 as the reason for his decision. He was said to be upset over the leadership's soft stand towards Ashok Gehlot loyalists who boycotted the CLP meeting on September 25, convened to pass a resolution authorising the Congress chief to appoint a successor to Gehlot, who was asked to contest the Congress presidential poll.

EXPRESS READ

5 Jarkiholi brothers to showcase their strength

Belagavi: Ahead of the 2023 polls, all five Jarkiholi brothers, irrespective of their party affiliation, have decided to join hands publicly and send a message to both the Congress and BJP that they are capable of changing political equations in the Belagavi region. P4

Kathua: SC orders trial of key accused as adult

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday held Shubam Sangra, a key accused in the sensational gang-rape and murder of an eight-year-old nomadic girl in Kathua in 2018, was not a minor at the time of the offence and ordered his trial as an adult. P9

India's first pvt rocket set for launch tomorrow

Chennai: Indian Space Research Organisation is all set for the maiden launch of the country's first privately developed rocket "Vikram-S" by space startup Skyroot Aerospace on November 18 from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

Police personnel stand guard near the contentious bus stop in Mysuru on Wednesday | UDAYASHANKAR S

Domes on bus shelter: BJP vs BJP in Mysuru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

IT'S BJP versus BJP. The controversy over dome-shaped bus shelter, which has come up on the Mysuru-Ooty Road, has pitted BJP MP Pratap Simha against party MLA S A Ramadas.

While Simha is the MP for Mysuru-Kodagu Lok Sabha constituency, Ramadas represents the K R Nagar assembly constituency in the district.

The controversy started last week when Simha threatened that he would demolish the bus shelter which has dome-like structures on it which resembles a mosque. Ramadas, however, clarified that the idea behind the design was to make it look like Mysuru Palace.

The local authorities swung into action and put up a flex carrying images of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, Suttur Mutt seer Shivarathri Deshikendra Swamiji and Shivarathri Rajendra Swamiji on the bus shelter.

Newly appointed Police Commissioner B Ramesh and DCP Pradeep Gunti inspected the place, following which security was beefed up around the bus shelter on Wednesday. Gunti also spoke with NHAI officers and KRDIL officials who had halted the work.

Labour dept hit by severe staff crunch

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

THE State Labour Department that implements close to 30 schemes of the state and Union governments is hit by a severe staff crunch.

Of the total 888 posts, 407 posts are vacant, which means the department is functioning with only 50 per cent staff.

There are many welfare schemes, especially meant for labourers from the unorganised sector who form a majority of the state's population, which is implemented by this department.

The schemes are aimed at skill improvement, financial aid, medical assistance and education to their children, which are implemented by labour inspectors on the ground.

There are only 81 labour inspectors for 233 taluks. "The size of our department is small, but we cater to a large number of people. We need at least one labour inspector for every taluk who works on the ground. Sanctioned strength for labour inspectors is 147, but only 81 are working," said a senior official.

The department works for the implementation of various labour laws, monitoring of working conditions and ensuring payment of minimum wages.

CONTINUED ON: P5

STRANGE TALE

Affair sparks PM 'security breach' at HAL Airport

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A 'security breach' at HAL Airport on November 9, just two days before Prime Minister Narendra Modi was to land there on his visit to Bengaluru, threw the Central security agencies and the police into a tizzy.

But it has now turned out that the 36-year-old intruder, a mason, who had reached Bengaluru on November 6 for the first time — and knew nothing about the city — was on the run from his lover's husband. He had jumped over the HAL Airport's perimeter wall in the small hours of November 9 without knowing that he had entered a high-security area. The alert Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel, maintaining vigil along the wall through patrols and CCTV cameras, found the intruder attempting to scale the airport compound twice near gate number 3. When he did manage to jump in, they immediately apprehended him near the trolley gate of the defence airport. He was later handed over to the jurisdictional HAL police for questioning.

However, the matter of "security breach" was reported to the Central agencies as the HAL Airport was being sanitised for fool-proof security ahead of PM Modi's arrival there. But in the days following his arrest, the truth came out through an investigation after his interrogation.

The intruder has been identified as **Mukund Khound**, a mason from Sonitpur district of Assam. S Girish, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Whitefield), told *The New Indian Express* that Khound and his lover Poorvi were in love with each since much before their respective marriages. Poorvi's husband Bipul works as an office attendant in a private firm in HAL area. P10

BOOKED UNDER VARIOUS SECTIONS

Mukund Khound has been booked under the Indian Official Secrets Act of 1923, and IPC Sections 418, 379 and 511.